

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-5, 8 and 9 are amended. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found at least at paragraph [0040] and Figs. 4 - 6 of the specification. Claims 2-5, 8 and 9 are amended for form. No new matter is added.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Iizuka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,813,576) in view of Maas et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,925,106). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Iizuka and Maas, alone or in a permissible combination, fail to teach and would not have rendered obvious every claimed feature of independent claim 1. For example, Iizuka and Maas fail to teach and would not have rendered obvious "the meshes each being coupled to a separate mesh ring," as recited in independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

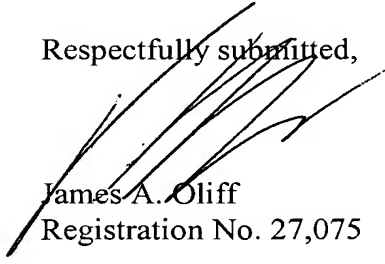
The Office Action asserts that the nets 133 of Iizuka corresponds to the claimed mesh (see page 3 of the Office Action). However, the nets 133 of Iizuka are disposed on the same bubbling element 132, and thus are not coupled to separate bubbling elements (see Fig. 1 of Iizuka). Therefore, Iizuka does not disclose the features of independent claim 1. Maas does not remedy the above-described deficiencies of Iizuka.

For at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is patentable over Iizuka and Maas. Claims 2-9 depend from independent claim 1, and are patentable for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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